



EXHIBIT 16
DATE 3-5-07
HB 808

MONTANA ADVOCACY PROGRAM, INC.

The Civil Rights Protection & Advocacy System for the State of Montana

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March 5, 2007

The Hon. John Sinrud, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee

In support of a \$300,000 appropriation for the Resource Facilitation Service for people with traumatic brain injury

Dear Rep. Sinrud and Members of the Committee:

The Montana Advocacy urges your support of the request of the Brain Injury Association of Montana to appropriate \$300,000 to allow continued operation of the resource facilitation service

The revenue raised by this measure would help Montana grapple with a large and growing problem: how to help an increasing number of brain injury survivors recognize and respond to the symptoms of brain injury, so that they receive timely medical, rehabilitation and other support services.

People with mild and moderate brain injuries can take months and even years to figure out that they have injury. The information provided by hospital emergency rooms seldom has an impact on people still reeling from a medical crisis. Patients may be unable to comprehend information about brain injury for weeks or months after the injury.

Yet the longer it takes a survivor to understand the need for an evaluation and services, the worse the prognosis for recovery. That's the because the brain is most "plastic" during the eight months immediately following injury, when the brain is repairing itself and creating new neural pathways to replace the damaged ones.

RFS schedules calls to survivors who have been referred by hospitals, provides the right information at the right time, helps individuals and families problem-solve, and provides referral and other self-advocacy supports.

Finally, RFS is a community-based service that is supported by a statewide network of survivors and families. It is easy to find, affiliated with the Brain Injury Association of America and integrated into the brain injury community

Please help the community of brain injury survivors to preserve RFS and to continue building on that foundation by passing HB 441.

Yours truly,

Anita Roessmann